

23.—BREEDING HABITS OF THE COMMON KRAIT
(*BUNGARUS CAERULEUS*).

As I have noticed in an article in a back number of your *Journal* that it is unusual to find snakes in pairs after the laying of the eggs, the following may be of interest.

A large pile of loose lumps of sand-stone was being removed in a market garden some two hundred yards from my house by some boys in our school. Near the bottom of the pile a krait about 3 feet long was found in a small hollow between the lumps of stone. This was killed as it tried to escape. Then some eggs were seen. Eleven were taken out by the boys, and just as the twelfth and last was to be removed a second larger krait was seen, in another hollow between stones, beside the eggs. Later this was killed also. The eggs averaged $1\frac{1}{2} \times 4/5$ in. They contained fully formed snakes which would have hatched in a few days. One or two showed signs of movement when the eggs were opened. This took place on 17th April 1945.

Kraits are very rarely seen here except in rainy weather, when they are fairly common, and there had been no appreciable rain for several months. May is our hottest month. Presumably these snakes aestivate in such places as that in which this pair were found.

On the next day, while clearing a further part of the pile of stones, two more kraits were found and a second collection of fifteen eggs was uncovered at a place about five feet distant from the first. So that in all four kraits and twenty-seven eggs were destroyed out of quite a small pile of stones.

I am sorry that I was not informed at once of the second find, but I am quite satisfied that my informant is speaking the truth, and both finds were witnessed by at least 15 people.

DOHNAVUR,
TINNEVELLY DISTRICT,
S. INDIA.
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C. G. WEBB-PEPLOE.

[In an article on the 'Social Life of Snakes' (Vol. xxvi, p. 469), Mr. S. H. Prater discusses what is known about association between snakes. Such records as are available indicate that association between the male and female may continue after union has taken place and is sometimes prolonged even after the deposition of the eggs. Unfortunately the writer of the note did not ascertain the sexes of the kraits. If they were male and female his record is an interesting instance of prolonged association. The note also supports a previous record in our *Journal* that the female krait assists the incubation of the eggs by coiling around them. Undoubtedly more snakes than we are aware of do this. Commonly, the eggs are deserted and their incubation assisted by the heat of the sun and from the fermenting animal and vegetable matter in which they are laid. The number of eggs reported by the author of the above note is larger than previously recorded. The largest